

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION USNATO
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
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UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 2617

USIA FOR IEU, IMV; FOR P&C'S; STATE FOR CU/EE, EUR/SOV

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIETS DECRY UNEQUAL FILM EXCHANGES WITH WEST

1. SUMMARY: TWO RECENT ARTICLES ON FILM EXCHANGES, IN "SOVETSKAYA KULTURA" AND "LITERATURYNAYA GAZETA," CONTINUE THE PRESS CAMPAIGN TO CLAIM HIGH MARKS FOR SOVIET PERFORMANCE ON CSCE BASKET III ISSUES AND THAT THE NON-ADHERENCE IS ON THE OTHER SIDE. IT IS THE WEST WHICH FEARS THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE FULL EXHCANGES OF CULTURE AND INFORMATION IMPLIED IN THE CSCE FINAL ACT. END SUMMARY.

2. M. YAKOVICH, A CAMERAMAN WHO RECENTLY VISITED US, COM- PLAINS IN A JANUARY 27 SOVETSKAYA KULTURA ARTICLE THAT DURING HIS WHOLE STAY HE NEVER SAY ANY ADVERTISING UNCLASSIFIED
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OF SOVIET MOVIES, DESPITE US SKILLS AT SELLING THROUGH ADVERTISING. THIS IS ESPECIALLY STRANGE, HE SAYS, BE-

CAUSE AT SAME TIME US MASS MEDIA IMPOSES IDEA, DESPITE HELSINKI, THAT USSR EXERTS ALL KINDS OF OBSTACLES IN PATH OF CULTURAL AND, IN PARTICULAR, FILM EXCHANGE.

2. THOSE IN US OPPOSED TO DETENTE CLAIM, ACCORDING TO YAKOVICH, THAT CINEMA EXCHANGE IS GOOD ONLY FOR USSR, WHICH USES IT FOR PROPAGANDA, BUT USSR DOES NOT WISH TO PURCHASE AND SHOW WESTERN FILMS TO SOVIET PUBLIC. BUT AMERICANS, EVEN WHEN THEY PURCHASE SOVIET FILMS, DO NOT SHOW THEM TO PUBLIC. FOR EXAMPLE, COLUMBIA PURCHASED "LIBERATION" AND GAVE ASSURANCES IT WOULD BE BROADLY ADVERTISED AND SHOWN, BUT IT WAS SHOWN TO ONLY VERY NARROW NUMBER OF PEOPLE.

3. YAKOVICH CLAIMS USSR SHOWS FILMS ON MODERN US LIFE. AMERICANS ARE PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN SOVIET CLASSICS AND AMERICAN COMPANIES TRY TO AVOID FILMS ON CONTEMPORARY SOVIET LIFE. "HERE IS EQUAL EXCHANGE FOR YOU" HE SAYS. FROM 1966 TO 1975 THE USSR HAS BOUGHT SIXTY-ONE AMERICAN FILMS AND THE AMERICANS TWENTY-FIVE SOVIET FILMS. LAST YEAR THE US SHOWED NO SOVIET FILMS AT ALL. THESE ARE FACTS, YAKOVICH SAYS. BUT APPARENTLY THESE FACTS ARE NOT EFFECTIVE WHEN SPEAKING OF MYTHICAL OBSTACLES PUT UP BY USSR AGAINST FILM EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

4. YAKOVICH CONCLUDES WITH CITATION OF HELSINKI FINAL ACT AND PROVISION PROMOTING FILM AND OTHER EXCHANGES. HE SAYS SOVIET CINEMATOGRAPHERS ARE READY TO IMPLEMENT THIS APPEAL. "BUT OUR READINESS MUST BE MET BY ENTHUSIASTIC AND PRACTICAL ACTIONS OF THE OTHER SIDE. ONLY UNDER THESE CONDITIONS CAN FILM EXCHANGE BEAR FRUIT."

5. IN FEBRUARY 11 LITERATURNAYA GAZETA INTERVIEW (FULL TEXT BY AIRGRAM), STATE CINEMATOGRAPHY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN YERMASH GIVES A MORE DETAILED EXPOSITION OF THE POST-CSCE SOVIET LINE THAT WEST HAS BEEN RELUCTANT PARTY ON FILM EXCHANGES, WHILE USSR HAS DONE MORE THAN UNCLASSIFIED
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ITS SHARE. THE MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN (MPAA) GETS HARD KNOCKS IN INTERVIEW, WHILE ON FILM FESTIVALS YERMASH PORTRAYS SOVIETS AS GIVING MORE THAN THEY.

6. INVOKING THE HELSINKI CONFERENCE AS SETTING GROUNDS FOR EXPANSION OF COOPERATION IN CINEMA AS WELL AS OTHER FIELDS, YERMASH BEGINS INTERVIEW WITH BREZHNEV QUOTE: "THE ART OF CINEMA HAS A GREAT INFLUENCE OVER THE MINDS AND HEARTS OF MILLIONS." HE GOES ON TO CITE SOVIET TIES

IN CINEMA TO OVER ONE HUNDRED COUNTRIES, SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN AND SPONSORSHIP OF INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVALS, AND SOVIET HOSPITALITY TO FILM WEEKS OF FRANCE, NORWAY, CANADA, JAPAN, AND BRITAIN.

7. ASKED WHO IS "IN DEBT" IN MOVIE EXCHANGES, YERMASH SAYS USSR ANNUALLY BUYS SIXTY - SEVENTY FILMS FROM SOCIALIST COUNTRIES AND FIFTY-SIXTY FROM CAPITALIST COUNTRIES. LAST YEAR SOVIETS ARRANGED MASS SHOWINGS OF TEN NEW AMERICAN FILMS AS WELL AS NUMEROUS OTHERS FROM WEST, IN ADDITION TO CONTINUED CIRCULATION OF OTHERS PURCHASED EARLIER. IN CONTRAST, ONLY ONE OR TWO SOVIET FILMS REACHED MASS PUBLIC IN WEST. FOR EXAMPLE, COLUMBIA PICTURES BOUGHT "LIBERATION" SOME YEARS AGO BUT NEVER GAVE IT MASS CIRCULATION.

8. YERMASH SAYS WESTERN DEALERS ALLEGE LACK OF INTEREST TOWARD SOVIET LIFE AND QUOTES ITALIAN WEEKLY "TEMPO" STATEMENT THAT SOVIET CINEMA LACKS "EROTICISM" AND IS "TOO INNOCENT AND DULL." HE REFUTES THIS VIEW BY CITING FAVORABLE REVIEWS AND LAYS BLAME ON DISTRIBUTORS FOR POOR PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OF SOVIET CINEMA.

9. YERMASH SINGLES OUT MPAA WHICH "IS MORE ANXIOUS TO PREVENT SOVIET MOVIES FROM GETTING TO AMERICAN SCREEN THAN TO BROADEN SOVIET-AMERICAN FILM DISTRIBUTION TIES. HE REMINDS READERS OF CHARGE THAT MPAA BLOCKED AMERICAN PARTICIPATION IN SIXTH MOSCOW INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL, A STEP CONTRARY TO SPIRIT OF DETENTE. HE SAYS AMERICAN COMPANIES SEEK NOT TO TAKE SOVIET FILMS FOR MASS DISTRIBUTION, AGAIN DUE TO ALLEGED "LACK OF INTEREST" ON PART OF UNCLASSIFIED
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PUBLIC. THOSE SOVIET FILMS PURCHASED ARE NOT SHOWN AT ALL, OR JUST SHOWN IN ONE OR TWO THEATERS FOR SHORT PERIODS.

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10. YERMASH STRESSES HIGH ARTISTIC QUALITY OF SOVIET FILMS AND SAYS 1973 FILM WEEKS IN NEW YORK, LOS ANGELES, SAN FRANCISCO, AND WASHINGTON WERE PACKED, BUT FILMS DID NOT REACH MASS PUBLIC. "DAWNS ARE QUIET HERE" RECEIVED AN OSCAR, BUT WAS ABSENT FROM US SCREEN. YERMASH QUOTES A SAN FRANCISCO REVIEWER ON "ONE HUNDRED DAYS AFTER CHILDHOOD": "LET US HOPE THE MOVIE WILL COME BACK TO US TO BE SHOWN TO THE BROADEST PUBLIC; ITS WARMTH, DEPTH, HUMOR, AND INTEREITY OF EMOTIONS GIVE WELCOME RESPITE FROM VIOLENCE AND BLOODSHED WHICH HAVE TAKEN OVER AMERICAN SCREEN NOWADAYS." BUT, YERMASH SAYS, AMERICANS HAVE NOT ARRANGED MASS DISTRIBUTION YET.

11. USSR, YERMASH GOES ON, GETS SHORT END ON FILM WEEKS, WITH SOVIETS GIVING FAR WIDER PUBLICITY TO FOREIGN EVENTS HERE THAN SOVIETS RECEIVE ABROAD. IN CONTRAST,
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ANTI-SOVIET FILMS SUCH AS "SNAKE," "NIKOLAS AND ALEXANDRA," "SWEET MOVIE," "FIRST CIRCLE," "GIRL FROM PETROVKA," AND "INNOCENT SPIES" ARE BROADLY SHOWN.

12. YERMASH ESTABLISHES SOVIET POSITION OF CONTINUING TO BUY FOREIGN FILMS IN FUTURE: E.G., AMERICAN FILMS "CONRACK," "BIG RACES," "AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS", AND OTHER WESTERN FILMS. THIS NOT EASY HOWEVER, AS WESTERN FILMS ARE PACKED WITH VIOLENCE, RACISM, SEX, AGGRESSION, AND SOMETIMES FASCISM. HE EXTOLLS WHAT

SOVIETS HAVE DONE TO INTRODUCE BEST OF WORLD CINEMA TO SOVIET PUBLIC AND LAMETNS POOR KNOWLEDGE OF SOVIET FILMS ABROAD.

13. YERMASH ALSO COMMENTS ON COPRODUCTIONS WITH MANY COUNTRIES, INCLUDING SOVIET-AMERICAN FIRST: "BLUEBIRD," AND A FUTURE PLAN WITH TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX.

14. YERMASH ESTOLLS AT LENGTH SOVIET ORGANIZATION OF FESTIVALS AND COMPLAINS OF POOR TREATMENT OF USSR AT FOREIGN FESTIVALS. HE CONCLUDES EMPHASIZING SOVIET DESIRE TO EXPAND MUTUAL TIES AND HOPES WESTERN CINEMA ORGANIZATIONS WILL BE GOVERNED BY SPIRIT OF HELSINKI AND ASPIRATIONS OF PEOPLES TOWARD FRIENDSHIP AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING.

15. COMMENT: THE ABOVE ARTICLES ON FILM EXCHANGE FIT COMFORTABLY WITHIN CONTEXT OF MANY NOW APPEARING ON SOVIET PERFORMANCE ON BASKET II OF CSCE FINAL ACT. THEY ALSO BOLSTER LONG ESTABLISHED SOVIET ARGUMENT THAT WEST, USA ESPECIALLY, HAS PURPOSEFULLY KEPT SOVIET FILMS FROM A FULLY COMPETITIVE RUN AT CAPITALIST MARKETS, WHICH THEIR ARTISTIC QUALITIES WOULD OTHERWISE ENSURE.
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